



Putting It All Together – From Awareness of Mood to Analysis of Tone Using “By the Waters of Babylon” Foundation Lesson

All of the activities that follow are based on the excerpt from “By the Waters of Babylon.” Read the passage carefully and complete the activities that follow it.

All the same, when I came to the Place of the Gods, I was afraid, afraid. The current of the great river is very strong – it gripped my raft with its hands. That was magic, for the river itself is wide and calm. I could feel evil spirits about me, in the bright morning; I could feel their breath on my neck as I was swept down the stream. Never have I been so much alone – I tried to think of my knowledge, but it was a squirrel’s heap of winter nuts. There was no strength in my knowledge any more, and I felt small and naked as a new-hatched bird – alone upon the great river, the servant of the gods.

Understanding Mood

Levels of Thinking: Remember

Mood is the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work. In other words, mood is the emotional response of the reader to the text.

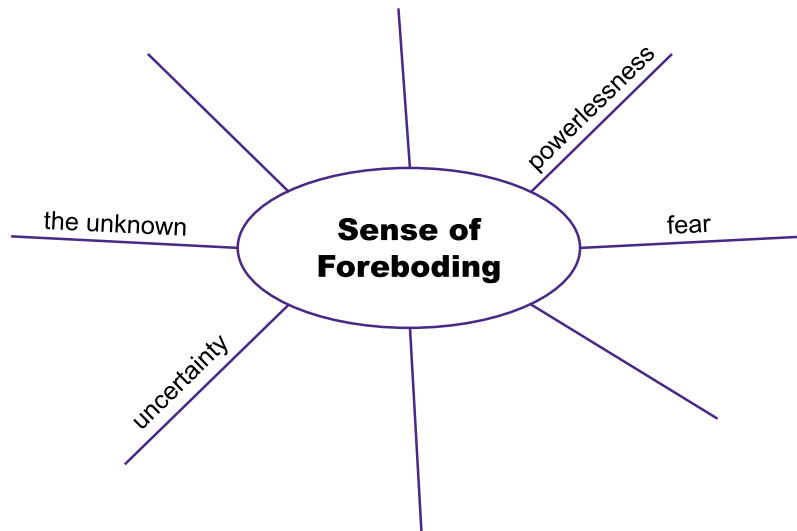
One way to describe the mood of the passage is that it creates a *sense of foreboding* for the reader.

A sense of foreboding is a feeling or premonition that something bad or harmful is about to happen. Two synonyms of the word “foreboding” are *premonition* and *dread*.

How do we *know* that something bad or harmful is about to happen? What makes us feel this way? Remember that mood is the reader’s emotional reaction to a text, and that an author uses the resources of language to make the reader react in this way.

Levels of Thinking: Remember and Understand

1. A sense of foreboding is created through the combination of many feelings. Look at the graphic below. On the line are some feelings and emotions that might contribute to or be an aspect of a sense of foreboding. Thinking back to a time when you felt a premonition or a feeling of dread, fill in the rest of the lines with other words that might contribute to a sense of foreboding.



Levels of Thinking: Remember, Understand, Apply

- Write a paragraph that describes a time when you felt a sense of foreboding. Try to recreate that same feeling. Do not use the word “foreboding” in your paragraph.

Identifying Diction and Imagery That Contribute to Mood

Levels of Thinking: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze

- Carefully read the passage from “By the Waters of Babylon.” Fill in the chart with words and images that create a sense of foreboding for the reader.

Diction	Imagery
afraid, afraid evil	Place of the Gods evil spirits

Classifying Diction and Imagery That Contribute to Tone

Levels of Thinking: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze

These same words and images also give us clues about the speaker’s attitude or tone.

Tone is the writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience. It is conveyed primarily through the author’s choice of diction, imagery, details, figures of speech, and syntax.



4. In this case the speaker also seems to have a sense of foreboding. Look back at the words on the spiral graphic and the words and images you listed on the chart above. How many of these words describe how the speaker feels? Link as many of the words from the spiral graphic to the words and images in the chart that seem to express that feeling. Study the example and then finish filling in the chart below.

Word from Graphic	Diction	Imagery
<p>Powerlessness</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>strong</p> <p>swept</p> <p>gripped</p> <p>small</p> <p>naked</p> <p>alone</p>	<p>"it gripped my raft with its hands"</p> <p>"swept down the stream"</p> <p>"my knowledge, but it was a squirrel's heap of winter nuts"</p> <p>"no strength in my knowledge"</p>

Now fill in the blanks below to explain **how** some of the words and images help to illustrate the speaker's tone. The first one is done for you.

The speaker's feeling of powerlessness is illustrated through the use of the image "it gripped my raft with its hands." The speaker feels unable to escape from the river and where it is taking him. He personifies the river making it seem powerful and in control while he is helpless.

- a. The speaker's feeling of _____ is illustrated through the use of the image "_____." The speaker _____.
- b. The speaker's feeling of _____ is illustrated through the use of the words "_____" and "_____." The speaker _____.

Details

6. Identify at least one detail from the paragraph. _____

7. How does this detail add to the overall sense of foreboding?

8. Fill in the chart below with the words and images from the passage that illustrate the physical nature of the day and the river.

Diction	Imagery

9. What is the effect of the contrast between the physical nature of the day and the reader and character’s sense of foreboding?

Levels of Thinking: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, Create

10. Reread the paragraph you wrote recounting a time when you felt a sense of foreboding. As the author, you selected, consciously or unconsciously, words and images to try to recreate your tone or feeling of foreboding. Fill in the chart below with words and images from your paragraph that helped to create this feeling.

Diction	Imagery

11. Rewrite your paragraph, adding at least three words or images and two details to help create a sense of foreboding.

Identifying Figurative Language, Understanding Comparisons, and Discussing Effect

Levels of Thinking: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze

First, identify the figurative language in the lines below. Then fill in the blanks to identify the comparisons and discuss the effect of the use of the device. Do not use the word “foreboding.” You may use words from the first graphic or synonyms where appropriate.

12. _____ “Never have I been so much alone – I tried to think of my knowledge, but it was a squirrel’s heap of winter nuts.”

Comparing the speaker’s _____ to _____
 _____ shows the speaker’s _____
 because _____



13. _____ “alone upon the great river, the servant of the gods.”

Identifying the _____ as a _____ makes the river seem _____ because _____

14. _____ “I felt small and naked as a new-hatched bird –”

Comparing the speaker to _____ illustrates his _____ because _____

15. _____ “The current of the great river is very strong – it gripped my raft with its hands.”

By giving the river current _____ to grip the raft, the river seems to be _____. This adds to the speaker’s sense of foreboding because _____

16. Reread the paragraph you wrote earlier. Add at least two examples of figurative language that help to develop the tone.

Language

Language is the entire body of words used in a text, not simply isolated bits of diction. These words qualify how the work is written, not the attitude or tone. Like diction, the language of a passage has control over tone.

17. Circle all of the words below that could be used to describe the language of the passage. Look up any words you are unsure of.

- plain, literal, detached, colloquial, pretentious, ordinary, learned, figurative, simple, concrete, symbolic, cultured, lyrical, esoteric, emotional

Levels of Thinking: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate

18. Select one of the words describing language that you circled and justify your answer.

19. In what way(s) does the language contribute to the tone?

20. Reread your paragraph. Is the language appropriate for the tone you are trying to develop? If not, revise your paragraph.
21. List three words that could be used to describe the language you used in your paragraph.

Sentence Structure

22. Underline the independent clause in the following sentence.
“All the same, when I came to the Place of the Gods, I was afraid, afraid.”
23. Is this a periodic or cumulative sentence? _____
24. How does this sentence structure contribute to the tone?
25. What is the effect of the repetition of the word “afraid”?
26. Write the sentence that includes parallel structure.
27. How does the parallel structure contribute to the tone?
28. How does the use of dashes illustrate the speaker’s sense of foreboding?
29. Identify the appositive phrase in the paragraph.
30. What is being renamed?

Putting It All Together – Journal

35. Carefully read the paragraph assigned. Fill in the journal with evidence, examples of diction, imagery, figures of speech, details, and syntax that contribute to the tone. You must include at least five pieces of evidence and identify each device. Your commentary must explain how or why the evidence helps to illustrate the speaker’s or writer’s tone.

Device – Evidence	Commentary

Timed Writing – 12 minutes (Use your journal)

36. In a carefully reasoned paragraph, analyze how an element of language (diction, imagery, figures of speech, details, or syntax) illustrates the speaker’s tone.